



## LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRATION

### 135 Communities and 16 Municipalities Honored for Participation in Returns Project

The successful completion of 135 infrastructure projects to support returns and reintegration of minorities in Kosovo and to help local municipalities and communities improve living conditions for all citizens, including returnees, was celebrated with a closing ceremony on September 23 in Pristina. USAID's Municipal Integration and Support Initiative (MISI) concluded its five years of work by bringing together representatives from the 16 participating municipalities and 135 communities.



Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director [right], issued Certificates of Appreciation to partner municipalities and communities

Mayors, deputy mayors, officials and community representatives, who participated in MISI, received certificates and offered remarks on the five years of cooperation between the project and Kosovo communities. The project was carried out by Mercy Corps.

"This program, which was designed to improve conditions for returns and ethnic integration in Kosovo, particularly in small, mixed ethnic communities, has sponsored projects in half the municipalities of Kosovo and has improved the lives of over 400,000 people," said Tina Kaidanow, U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo. "These projects are also remarkable in that they encourage local communities and their representatives to be active partners in the improvement of their living conditions, together with municipal authorities and the international community." The Municipal Integration and Support Initiative helped municipalities improve infrastructure needed to facilitate the process of returns and reintegration of minorities.

Very often, explained Cathy Rothenberger, Director of Mercy Corps, the work done on these projects provided the first opportunity for people from different ethnic groups to meet and work together.

"These projects not only reinforced a multi-ethnic perspective, they also actively engaged young people, giving them an opportunity to represent their views along with others in the community," Rothenberger said. Projects included the rehabilitation of roads, schools, sports fields and health and community centers, as well as water and sanitation projects.

### Performance Measurement System Introduced to Help Improve Municipal Services

The first steps to measure municipalities' success in delivering services to residents have been taken with the agreement of the Ministry of Local Government and municipal governments to establish a "performance measurement system."

Using a performance measurement system, which will measure how well a municipality is delivering services (ranging from garbage collection to preparation of documents for residents), will help municipalities better analyze their performance and how to improve it as well as provide residents with clear demonstration of the standard of municipal services they are receiving. The next step in the process will be determining what services should be monitored and developing the indicators. An expert working group will be handling this step. Setting standards in municipal service delivery benefits the municipalities by helping them improve services, aids the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) in monitoring municipal service delivery, and it will improve the services received by residents. This mechanism will become a cornerstone for results-oriented development and citizen-oriented policies of local governments in Kosovo.

The initiation of a performance management system was based on a study of local government performance measurement mechanisms, which helped the MLGA develop a comprehensive performance measurement by using the best practices from various European countries and the United States.

USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative (EMI) conducted the study, developed an easy-to-use evaluation scheme and helped the MLGA start the process. EMI will continue to work with municipal governments, the MLGA and expert working groups to further develop the system, the standards and the indicators. The Effective Municipalities Initiative is a three-year activity that seeks to support the proposed decentralization process and help local and central government perform optimally. It is implemented by RTI International.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### Recent Poll Reveals Increase in Potential for Inter-ethnic Reconciliation While Economic Concerns Rate High

An increase in the number of Kosovo Serbs saying that they would be willing to work with Kosovo Albanians, compared to previous surveys, was noted in the most recent "Fast Facts" from the Early Warning System (EWS) Report. According to the survey, 35% of Kosovo Serb respondents would cooperate with Kosovo Albanians, up from 24% in May 2008. This is the highest level reached since before Kosovo's Government declared independence last February.

However, unemployment remains the paramount concern, followed by poverty and instability of the energy supply, according to the poll of 1,260 people in Kosovo. The poll also noted a general decrease in satisfaction with the work of several institutions. The most dramatic decrease in approval ratings was a decrease of 33 percentage points for the SRSG and a decrease of 22 points for UNMIK. A moderate decrease in the approval rating was reported for the Kosovo Assembly, the President and the Prime Minister.

"Fast Facts" from the Early Warning System Report, which summarizes the main findings of the poll, was released on October 1, covering July through September 2008. The entire report, Early Warning System Report #22, providing poll results and a complete analysis for the July to September period, will be available in mid-October on <http://www.ks.undp.org>. Early Warning Reports review current trends in the satisfaction of Kosovo residents with institutions and their perceptions on issues related to security, economy, interethnic relations, and corruption. USAID supports the reports in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme in Kosovo.

## NEW ACTIVITIES

### Support to Kosovo's Young Leaders Project Starts

Support to Kosovo's Young Leaders, a new USAID program addressing key concerns of youth in Kosovo, including economic opportunity, civic participation, and inter-ethnic reconciliation, started at the end of September.

This three-year program will help young people ages 15-26 from Kosovo's diverse communities become active participants in building a shared future for themselves and their communities. The program will help youth gain relevant vocational and entrepreneurship skills, and provide training on community mobilization, civic participation and advocacy.

The program will place trainees in internships and apprenticeships to provide real-world opportunities, and support entrepreneurial youth in developing business plans and financing start-up activities. Additionally, the program will encourage young people to become leaders in their communities by designing and implementing community projects relevant to their community needs.

Through the Support to Kosovo's Young Leaders project, USAID expects to provide 2,400 young people with practical work experience in public and private institutions, leading to one-third of these people gaining full-time employment. The Support to Kosovo's Young Leaders project will be implemented by Mercy Corps.

### New Anti-Trafficking Program To Aid Victims and Prevent Trafficking

Helping victims of trafficking and preventing trafficking in Kosovo are the two objectives of USAID's new Kosovo Anti-Trafficking Program.

This three-year program, which started in September, will support long-term reintegration services available to victims of trafficking, and increase community participation in the prevention of trafficking in Kosovo. The activity will provide grants to enable existing women's shelters to establish or expand residential reintegration facilities for victims of trafficking, and will also support the sustainability of the shelters by establishing a micro-fund to enable shelters to establish a small business.

The Kosovo Anti-Trafficking Program will also support the establishment of several pilot social networks consisting of social workers, community leaders, teachers and youth peers, to increase community participation in the prevention of trafficking. USAID has partnered with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its sub-partner, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), to undertake the Kosovo Anti-Trafficking Program.

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